

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
TO H.R. 4358
OFFERED BY MR. KATKO OF NEW YORK**

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

2 This Act may be cited as the “Preliminary Damage
3 Assessment Improvement Act of 2020”.

4 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) Preliminary damage assessments play a
7 critical role in assessing and validating the impact
8 and magnitude of a disaster.

9 (2) Through the preliminary damage assess-
10 ment process, representatives from the Federal
11 Emergency Management Agency validate informa-
12 tion gathered by State and local officials that serves
13 as the basis for disaster assistance requests.

14 (3) Various factors can impact the duration of
15 a preliminary damage assessment and the cor-
16 responding submission of a major disaster request,
17 however, the average time between when a disaster
18 occurs, and the submission of a corresponding dis-

1 aster request has been found to be approximately
2 twenty days longer for flooding disasters.

3 (4) With communities across the country facing
4 increased instances of catastrophic flooding and
5 other extreme weather events, accurate and efficient
6 preliminary damage assessments have become criti-
7 cally important to the relief process for impacted
8 states and municipalities.

9 **SEC. 3. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the
11 date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the
12 Federal Emergency Management Agency shall submit to
13 Congress a report describing the preliminary damage as-
14 sessment process, as supported by the Federal Emergency
15 Management Agency in the 5 years before the date of en-
16 actment of this Act.

17 (b) CONTENTS.—The report described in subsection
18 (a) shall contain the following:

19 (1) The process of the Federal Emergency
20 Management Agency for deploying personnel to sup-
21 port preliminary damage assessments.

22 (2) The number of Agency staff participating
23 on disaster assessment teams.

24 (3) The training and experience of such staff
25 described in paragraph (2).

1 (4) A calculation of the average amount of time
2 disaster assessment teams described in paragraph
3 (1) are deployed to a disaster area.

4 (5) The efforts of the Agency to maintain a
5 consistent liaison between the Agency and State,
6 local, Tribal, and territorial officials within a dis-
7 aster area.

8 **SEC. 4. PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the
10 date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the
11 Federal Emergency Management Agency shall establish a
12 training regime under section 206.33(b) of title 44, Code
13 of Federal Regulations, within the Federal Emergency
14 Management Agency to ensure preliminary damage as-
15 sessments are conducted and reviewed under consistent
16 guidelines.

17 (b) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Administrator shall an-
18 nually submit to Congress a report on the number and
19 type of instances under which Federal Emergency Man-
20 agement Agency personnel have overturned decisions
21 made by personnel in the field.

22 (c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 2 years
23 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator
24 shall submit to Congress a report—

1 (1) describing the establishment of disaster
2 guidelines from Federal Emergency Management
3 Agency personnel described under subsection (a);

4 (2) assessing whether the duration of the de-
5 ployment of Federal Emergency Management Agen-
6 cy personnel to conduct a preliminary damage as-
7 sessment is longer based on specific disaster condi-
8 tions;

9 (3) legislative recommendations to improve the
10 operation, deployment, and staffing of disaster per-
11 sonnel.

12 (d) DEFINITION OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERN-
13 MENT.—For purposes of this Act, the terms “State” and
14 “local government” have the meanings given such terms
15 in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief
16 and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122).

